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ABSTRACT

This position paper examines the changing focus of citizenship education in Australia over the past 40 years. Citizenship education has not achieved as high a profile in Australia as in the United States and this situation has become a growing concern for many educators and community leaders. An examination is made on how questioning traditional values and changing the international scene have impacted the way Australians and Australian governments have come to see themselves. The changing nature of Australian society in recent years through a series of events, processes, and initiatives is recognized. A call for consensus is made in order to develop a citizenship education program for the Australian students to function in the new era of change. The paper includes the following divisions: (1) "Introduction"; (2) "Conflicting Images of Citizenship Education in Australia"; (3) "Issues for Citizenship and the School Curriculum"; (4) "Levels of Student Understanding"; (5) "Student Attitudes"; (6) "Opportunity to Learn"; (7) "Teacher Attitudes"; (8) "Student Participation"; (9) "National Curriculum"; (10 "Curriculum Options"; and (11) "Conclusions." In summary, the level of student understanding of political concepts and processes is an important component of being an effective citizen. The development of citizen education involves not only a reconceptualization of citizenship education, but also a rethinking of how citizenship education might best become a major component of the school curriculum. Contains 28 references. (EH)

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CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION for a NEW AGE

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Keynote address

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CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA

" As a nation we do not seem to know enough about our system of government and our national achievements. .... the Government's education program will strengthen our democracy by enlivening our appreciation of it. It will inform all Australians of the privileges and responsibilities of Australian democracy and ensure that Australians have sufficient information about our system of government to participate fully in decision-making processes. "

Paul Keating, Prime Minister of Australia, 23 June, 1994

INTRODUCTION

Citizenship education has been an important feature of the school curriculum in the United States from the time of Hamilton and Jefferson when it was argued that "educating people for citizenship was...a means of assuring the establishment and maintenance of the republic (Dynneson and Gross, 1992, p.2). Despite extensive recent concern and reflection on the nature and direction of citizenship education (Stanley & Nelson, 1986; Leming, 1992; Marker & Mehlinger, 1992; Bath, 1993; Kaltsounis, 1994) it remains a pivotal thread in the fabric of the school curriculum. In Australia, however, citizenship education has not received such a high profile over the past forty years (MacIntyre, 1994; Print, 1994) and this situation has become a growing concern for many educators and community leaders. Kennedy (1993, p. 1), for example, has argued :

> There has not been the historical need in Australia to create and reinforce a rationale for a "new" democracy. Australians in general have settled for a democracy based on their colonial heritage. For the most part, the issue of how a democratic culture might actively be manifested in Australia has remained unaddressed.

Yet in more recent times there has been a questioning of the traditional values that have forged Australian development over the last century. One perspective has been provided by the changing international scene. The wind down of the cold war, the emergence of powerful trading blocs such as the European Community and the North American Free Trade Association, the newly emerging role of the United Nations as an international umbrella agency for supporting multi-national peace and policing efforts, the globalisation of the

world economy and the potential of communications technology to breakdown barriers of time and space have all impacted on the way Australians and Australian governments have come to see themselves.

There is now a tendency to move away from Europe and Great Britain towards Asia, to see groupings such as the Asia Pacific Economic Community as providing access to new markets and commodities, to be internationally competitive in all aspects of economic life and to develop a nation of highly skilled individuals who can fuel future economic development. This multifaceted international context has played an important role in leading the Australian government and many citizens to question the nature of Australian identity as we head towards the twenty first century.

This concern has coincided with a series of events, processes and initiatives that have recognized the changing nature of Australian society :

- Beginning with the bicentennial of white settlement, fundamental issues have been raised about the relationship between European and aboriginal Australians. This has led to a government sponsored process of reconciliation that is ongoing.

- The role of women in Australian society has been subjected to critical scrutiny over the past two decades with the result that discrimination of both an implicit and explicit kind has been identified as a common experience for many Australian women. This has led to initiatives designed to remove barriers to women's participation in all
aspects of national life.

- Australia is no longer a country where the great majority of people claim some form of Anglo-Celtic heritage. Official government policy now proclaims Australia to be a multicultural society with citizens coming from all parts of Europe and increasingly from Asia as well. Many of these recent arrivals have little experience with an effective, working democratic form of government.

- Issues have been raised about the appropriateness of a British monarch being the titular head of the Australian government. There is now a robust, vocal republican debate that has both supporters and opponents along with increasingly formidable pressure groups.

- The Prime Minister, a fervent supporter of an Australian republic, has personally established a Civics Education Group to

advise him on the best ways to educate young people about Australia's political institutions, including the need to change them where necessary.

* The federal government has also supported an *Ideas for Australia* program and the Constitutional Centenary Foundation, and it has devoted some of its energy to the consideration of citizenship issues.

* The Australian Senate has established a Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs and it is examining the feasibility of developing national indicators that might assist planning and monitoring progress in relation to specific citizenship goals. The Senate has also funded the Parliamentary Education Office to promote effective understanding of parliamentary processes within Australia particularly amongst school students and visitors to Parliament House. This Office has now been responsible for the production of two major reports which have demonstrated the need for active citizenship education (SSCEET, 1989,1991).

* In 1989, Australian Ministers for Education adopted a set of national goals for schooling that highlighted active citizenship education as a key objective for the curriculum (AEC,1989).

It is not unreasonable, therefore, to assert at this point in time that Australia stands at the beginning of a new age, ready to cast off the remnants of a colonial past and to take on a new set of values that will underpin new directions and new ideals. In a sense, Australia is poised, as the US was in the eighteenth century and as many Asian and African nations were after 1945, to shape an identity that is unique and distinctive. What kind of citizenship education will be required to support young Australians in this post-colonial age and what do we know about the needs of students for citizenship education in the school curriculum?

CONFLICTING IMAGES OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA

At this stage a consensus as to the kind of citizenship education that is needed for the new future that is confronting Australia does not exist. Until recently little urgency was evident in the community or academic circles over the need to address citizenship education in schools. This situation has changed dramatically with the personal intervention of the Prime Minister (Keating, 1994) and his recent appointment of a Civics Education Group to consider ways to provide a public education program on Australian government, citizenship and the constitution. This group will report

soon and its recommendations will undoubtedly add to the lack of consensus about appropriate citizenship education.

Musgrave (1994) recently conducted a study of commonly used textbooks in Australian schools from 1895-1965 and identified five main strands that highlighted implicit values supporting citizenship formation in this period :

1. *Citizenship was not for all.* Aboriginal people, other non-white people and non- Anglo-Celtic migrants were largely excluded from consideration.

2. *Citizenship assumed a single dominant religion.* While sectarianism was excluded from texts used in state schools, there was the strong implication that Australia was a Christian country. Despite a strong Catholic minority it was also assumed to be Protestant.

3. *Citizenship was conceptualized in monolingual terms.* English, especially written English that reflected British values, was promoted as the language of state and people. Subsequently local variations have been gradually accepted.

4. *Citizenship promoted capitalist values.* A variation of the capitalist economic system has developed in Australia. Over time exhortations have sought to enhance the productive capacity of Australia and the work ethic of Australians.

5. *Citizenship was based on a British world view.* Australia's reliance upon and close alignment with Britain produced an excessively dependent perspective of international affairs. Acceptance of international responsibilities has come late for Australia with the first signs appearing in World War II.

This conceptualization of citizenship might fairly be labelled as 'colonial' in its purposes and functions. It emerged from a colonial endeavour on the part of the British government and it was maintained after independence because of the 'crimson thread of kinship' with Britain tied a newly emerging nation to its historical roots. It was exclusive in its application. Citizenship was for white, Anglo-Celtic Australians, and not even all of this group was treated equally. Musgrave (1994) has identified a dominant male ethos of 'mateship' in the textbooks as well as stereotypical views of male and female roles. Thus Anglo-Celtic women might be characterized as an excluded group. This colonial image of citizenship, based on exclusion, monoculturalism (including monolingualism and a dominant religion) together with unquestioning ties to Britain, is no

longer acceptable in the 1990s. A new image of citizenship is needed for a new age.

Carter (1993) has argued for the centrality of teaching about the institution of parliament as the basis for developing citizens. His argument has strong appeal to many (Carter, 1993, p80) :

> Constitutions and parliaments have evolved so as to reflect the values of the society from which they spring and provided that they remain flexible enough to suit changing social conditions, they remain in democratic countries as both facilitators of political action and the 'safety valve' of the 'nation' .... Parliamentary education emphasizes the importance of understanding the political culture of the nation and of the economic, social and ideological influences that were and are at work in developing and evolving its democratic institutions.

While Carter readily admits that "parliamentary education is but one component of an active citizenship curriculum" (1993,p78) it may be argued that his perspective presents a limited view of citizenship education. Other writers have pointed to the deficiencies of placing parliament and parliamentary processes at the heart of citizenship education. Gilbert (1993) , for example, has argued that education for citizenship should move beyond a concern for the formal participation of citizens in the political process to a consideration of the social and economic entitlements that are conferred on citizens as a result of community membership. He does not regard the state as the means by which the identity of citizens is established. Rather, he looks to the personal and particular circumstances of individuals to construct identity - circumstances such as race, class, gender, ethnicity and sexual preference. He is supported in this view by Singh (1993) who has argued for studying the work of active citizens as they go about the process of interacting with governments and other institutions in order to gain or maintain certain basic rights.

The different perspectives between Carter on the one hand and Gilbert and Singh on the other are important. Burchell (1994) has identified historical precedents for the different positions. The older tradition, akin to Carter's views, was based on the 'civic ideal', a product of Greek and Roman thought revived during the Renaissance. It emphasized a social citizenship that involved all citizens (as were defined at that time) in the political process and which committed them to a life of civic duty. Burchell suggests that :

> In this picture the political community - the republic or polis - is at once universal, in that it (and it alone)

> provides the means for full realisation of the human personality.....(1994,p19).

While this is an extreme statement of the position it is essentially the way in which Carter views parliamentary institutions - they actually are seen to confer rights, status and power on individuals. In a liberal democracy such as Australia, parliament is seen by Carter to be the heart of the modern polis and therefore at the centre of citizenship education.

The more recent tradition, as espoused by Gilbert and Singh, has its immediate roots in post modernism. It admits to no unifying forces in society but rather posits an individualism in which identity is constructed from personal and particular circumstances. The origins of this line have been traced (Burchell, 1994) to the late eighteenth century. Writers such as Montesquieu and Adam Smith reluctantly accepted that the 'civic ideal' was no longer possible in a world dominated by a market economy. In such a world the interests of individuals were no longer necessarily consistent with the interests of the state. This led to a new conception of a 'civil society' by which was meant :

> .... the social space in which the counterpoised forces of private interest could flourish outside the ambit of *raison d'etat* and civil *police* alike....(Burchell, 1994, p28)

Thus Burchell (1994) perceives the difference between the two ideals as essentially a conflict between a civic arena for active citizenship in a public sphere compared with a civil arena of private individuals free from the attentions of authorities. This conflict, he argued, is still a fundamental issue in citizenship education today.

Musgrave(1994) has also addressed the tension between these two ideals. He has highlighted the importance of teaching young people about the duties of citizenship while also criticizing Gilbert for neglecting such duties through an overemphasis on the rights of citizens. Yet are these two positions mutually exclusive? Must citizenship focus on either duties or rights? A clearer understanding of the concept of civil society will be helpful in addressing these questions (Diamond, 1994,p5) :

> Civil society is conceived ... as the realm of organised social life that is voluntary, self-generating, (largely) self-supporting, autonomous from the state, and bound be a legal order or set of shared rules. It is distinct from 'society' in general in that it involves citizens acting collectively in a public sphere to express their interests,

> passions, and ideas, exchange information, achieve mutual goals, make demands on the state, and hold state officials accountable.

The existence of a civil society, therefore, makes it possible for rights to be demanded and won in addition to the possibility that they might be conferred by the state. As Diamond has noted, this is a particularly important process for historically marginalised peoples who traditionally have been excluded from power. Yet he maintains that participants in a civil society require the protection of an institutionalized legal system to protect their autonomy and freedom of action. Thus Diamond concludes "... civil society not only restricts state power but legitimates state authority when that authority is based on the rule of law." (1994,p5)

Citizens must, it appears, not only have certain rights guaranteed them, they must also be committed to a particular kind of political governance that will provide them those rights. Some kind of 'civic ideal' must exist as a guarantee for 'civil rights' : rights and duties are mutually exclusive. The task of citizenship education in this context is to define a modern 'civic ideal' that is underpinned by the need for a 'civil society'. In this it must assume that individuals, either alone or acting together, will seek to influence the state and its functions. The fundamental issue for all citizens and the state , is to judge correctly the balance between public interest and private concern.

The question then arises - can an emphasis on the needs of a civil society maintain the necessary cohesion that is essential if people are to coexist harmoniously? Individualism run rampant could lead to a degree of fragmentation that would prevent concerted action and lead to a total breakdown of the state. Elshtain (1994), for example, acknowledges the necessity to recognize the legitimacy of difference within a democratic society has also argued, perhaps too forcefully, that highlighting difference as the crucial element in that society can be destructive :

> If I am her enemy - because I am white, or heterosexual, or an academic - her only desire can be to wipe me out. One makes war with enemies; one does democratic politics with opponents (1994, p10).

Thus for Elshtain (1994) the basis for recognizing difference is that she has something in common with other people - that commonality is expressed in a shared citizenship. Furthermore, without recognizing that such a bond exists, there can be little room for productive dialogue and the peaceful resolution of contentious issues.

It is possible to identify in Elshtain's thinking a preference for a neoclassical civic ideal. What is necessary to recognize today is that for many people the modern state no longer performs the supportive function and hence the emergence of the politics of difference as a powerful voice in modern civil society. Yet Elshtain is right in drawing attention to the logical conclusion of reifying difference : society would consist of groups of similarly different individuals who maintain their difference from others in order to have power and position.

The only way to avoid this situation is to promote a broad concept of citizenship that can accommodate difference without submerging it or rendering it powerless. Difference must maintain its voice within civil society but it should do so as part of a dialogical process that seeks justice and resources for all rather than the few. Citizenship education for the future must ensure that all voices are valued otherwise fragmentation will result.

A third perspective is based on the notion of citizenship as beyond national borders. Should a principal criterion for citizenship in the future be based on a national identity? Given the development of supra- nationalities in Europe, more recently in North America and to some degree Asia, is a citizenship education program based on a national identity appropriate for the future?

The link between national identity and citizenship is already part of the Australian debate on citizenship education. There have been elaborate arguments for basing citizenship education on national identity (Musgrave, 1994) as well as arguments for moving to an international identity (Castles, Cope, Kalantzis & Morrissey, 1990). In writing about the European community Meehan (1993, p185) proposed á formulation based on the concept of 'multiple' citizenship's:

> My conclusion is that a new kind of citizenship is emerging hat is neither national nor cosmopolitan but which is multiple in enabling the various identities that we all possess to be expressed, and our rights and duties exercised, through an increasingly complex configuration of common institutions, states, national and transnational interest groups and voluntary associations, local or provincial authorities, regions and alliances of regions.

This formulation applies specifically to the European Community though this could be seen as a prototype for groupings such as NAFTA and APEC. Yet considerable thought and debate would be required for an approach which took citizenship education beyond the immediacy of national identity.

ISSUES FOR CITIZENSHIP AND THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The importance of school-based citizenship education has been clearly demonstrated in the only nationally accepted statement of school-level curriculum intent, the so-called "Hobart declaration" or more precisely the *Common and Agreed national Goals for Schooling in Australia* (AEC,1989). Yet the reality of Australian schools is that citizenship education does not feature prominently in the formal school curriculum. Only one state, Queensland, has an explicit subject that is concerned with citizenship education and this highlights the discrepancy between the rhetoric of national curriculum goals and the reality of school curriculum practice as a significant problem for Australian social educators. Amongst others, two goals state:

> Goal 7. To develop knowledge, skills, attitudes and values which will enable students to participate as active and informed citizens in our democratic Australian society within an international context.
>
> Goal 6. To develop .... a capacity to exercise judgement in matters of morality, ethics and social justice (AEC,1989).

The argument for enhancing citizenship education in a school context has been well developed in the literature and will not be persued here. It is taken for granted that the case for learning about civics education has been well established, particularly that the impact of school-based learning on long-term student understanding and values is profound.

Recent research (Semb & Ellis, 1994) has significantly destabilized a popular and unfortunately accepted misperception that much of what is taught in classrooms is forgotten shortly thereafter. In a substantive meta-analysis of research the authors revealed that long-term retention of knowledge taught in a school context is substantially more than previously acknowledged. Furthermore, they argued that long-term retention of knowledge and associated

understanding, such as in the case of political literacy, can be enhanced by the application of several positive variables.

Consequently the introduction of citizenship education into the school curriculum has the possibility to make a constructive impact. But what form should this curriculum involvement take? This section briefly examines six issues that will need significant attention if citizenship education is to become an effective component within the various Australian school curricula.

Levels of Student Understanding

Student understanding of the subject matter associated with political processes may be classified into two related categories - student political knowledge and student political understanding. Political knowledge may be defined as the ability to recall factual information about political and parliamentary processes. Recalling the name of the lower house of federal parliament or the names of politicians in significant positions are examples of political knowledge. Political understanding refers to student ability to explain, preferably using appropriate concepts and labels, the processes of politics and parliament. An explanation of the concept of democracy or the role of a bicameral system are examples of political understanding.

The recent literature on political literacy in Australian schools is singularly condemnatory (SSCEET, 1989, 1991; Kennedy, et al., 1993; MacIntyre, 1994; Print, 1994). When the outcomes of research are added to this base of understanding, the results are a powerful indictment of our total educational system. And yet Australians, even young Australians, agree that it is important to possess political knowledge and understanding (ABC, 1994; Print, 1994).

The levels of student understanding can be demonstrated through the following tables based upon research on a representative sample of Year 10 students in NSW schools (Print, 1994). Qualitative research with Year 12 students suggested understanding and knowledge levels were similar (Print, 1994). The results from this research are not inconsistent with those from other studies of student political literacy which also reveal deplorably low levels of understanding. In the following examples the data relate only to the Federal Parliament and politics but they are essentially transferable to student knowledge and understanding of politics and parliament in general.

Most students could readily identify the leader of the federal opposition (Table 1), but a staggering 70% could not name the lower house of parliament. Nearly half knew of the relationship between

bills and laws, yet only 6% could state the size of the lower house and only 2% could name any four Federal members of cabinet Most Australians would not consider these to be acceptable levels of student knowledge about our political processes, especially as these knowledge items were set at the most elementary and fundamental level. As a very beginning step in a citizenship education program for a new age, Australian school students will need to know more about the processes of politics and parliament

Table 1 : Political Knowledge (percentage correct response)

	Leader	Lower house	Laws	Ministers	HR numbers
Total correct	74.6	30.1	46.2	1.9	6.1
Incorrect	25.3	69.9	53.8	98.1	93.9

Source : Print, 1994

Furthermore it could be argued that these are minimal levels of knowledge, much of which could be obtained from general sources such as the media. That even these sources appear to have failed to have a significant impact is even greater argument for direct intervention through the school curriculum for a citizenship education program.

The level of student understanding of political concepts and processes is also an important component of being an effective citizen. When asked to demonstrate an understanding of fundamental and significant political concepts and issues such as the role of political parties, the role of the Senate, local members, requirements for voting, the concept of democracy and the role of parliaments in our political process, students generally demonstrated remarkably meagre levels of understanding. Combining the low levels of political knowledge as seen in Table 1 with the data from Table 2, the argument for a new age in citizenship education in Australian schools

is compellingly made. In Table 2 the data indicate how students tried to respond to the concepts and processes indicated above with their responses categorized as demonstrating high, low or nil level of understanding.

Table 2 : Political Understanding (percentage at each level of understanding)

	Parties	Senate	MPs	Voting	Democracy	Parliaments
High	17.7	21.6	37.7	42.9	36.6	47.6
Low	16.3	3.8	3.0	30.1	10.3	4.4
Nil	66.0	74.6	59.3	27.0	53.1	48.0

Source : Print (1994)

Table 2 reveals that few students could explain the purpose of the Senate well and even fewer the role of political parties. While nearly half the students had a good understanding of the requirements for voting in federal elections and the working of parliament, only a third could explain the role of members of parliament. Of profound concern to a country such as Australia only a third of students demonstrated a good understanding of the concept of democracy.

These are but a selection of examples of what is clearly recognized as a significant problem.

Consequently what passes for existing programs for informing young Australians about political and governmental issues have been unsuccessful. We need new directions and approach as we prepare the next generation of young Australians. We need, in effect, a new age in citizenship education.

Student Attitudes

The attitudes students possess towards political processes are important as they influence student knowledge and understanding, are significant determinants of future behaviour, particularly significant political participation such as voting, and affect how subsequent learning about politics will occur. Attitudes are also

significant factors in influencing what people learn and how they come to understand and make personal sense out of that learning. Together with political knowledge and political understanding these three forms can be referred to as political literacy.

Low levels of support for politicians and political activities are manifest amongst Australia's youth. A recent survey, supported by previous research, found that students and other young people (under the age of 24 years) believe politicians to be untrustworthy, do not deserve to be supported, do not wish to be associated with them and generally find them disreputable (ABC, 1994).

Yet paradoxically fundamentally strong support can also be found for the concepts and practices of democracy, parliament and voting amongst these same young people (ABC, 1994; Print, 1994). Along the way students in our schools have become significantly disenchantment with the manifestations of the political process and this has affected their attitudes towards substantive components of the political process.

An appropriately constructed citizenship education program could address these issues in a positive way. It would enable students to reflect upon their attitudes and values in the light of non-partisan information. It would also give them an opportunity, through a participative process, of forming fundamental values associated with the democratic process.

Opportunity to Learn

The poor levels of student political literacy reflect two phenomena present in Australian schools for the past thirty years, namely the lack of opportunity to learn (OTL) and study civics education in Australian schools, and second, unsupportive, negative attitudes by social education teachers towards citizenship education. It is hardly surprising therefore to find that students exhibit both low levels of political understanding and a lack of supportive attitudes for political processes. At a time when student retention rates are rising rapidly, when the length of schooling is directly associated with job acquisition and university entrance and when the nature of the upper secondary school curriculum is experiencing ferment, it is appropriate to reconsider the role of citizenship education.

One of the most interesting comparisons between American and Australian citizenship education is the relationship between formal education and voting requirements. In the U.S. the great majority of states require students to study courses in citizenship education and the remainder provide optional study. Them, as citizens, Americans have the option of voting. In Australia, the situation is reversed. An examination of the Australian school

curriculum reveals that it is extremely difficult for students, particularly those in their last two years of schooling, to obtain any substantive form of subject-based understanding of politics and parliamentary processes.

That is certainly the case with New South Wales, the largest state in the Australian Commonwealth. In NSW it is not possible to study civics education in any depth in the last two years of secondary school (Print, 1994). A small part of subjects such as Society and Culture, a larger part of Legal Studies, some of General Studies, and the occasional mention in Modern History as well as Economics constitutes the available opportunities. Given the numbers of students studying these subjects, this exposure to what could be loosely referred to as civics education, is grossly inadequate. As over thirty percent of Australian school students attend school in NSW this lack of exposure to civics education is typical of the Australian curriculum context and is insufficient to meet student needs and the needs of the country for effective citizenship participation.

Teacher Attitudes

The past thirty years has witnessed a period of deliberate inactivity by social education teachers in Australia so that they should not be perceived to be part of any process of deliberately teaching students about politics and government. This concern stems principally from three sources - concerns about possibly promoting partisan political perspectives, lack of curricular support, and an insufficient knowledge base to effectively teach about politics in schools.

Concerns about promoting party political views amongst teachers have reflected the community's views that teachers should not be purposively politically partisan in schools. A belief that teachers may attempt to present partisan views has seen state educational authorities and the community adopt a pre-emptive position.

Lack of support for promoting political literacy, also reflecting the lack of curricular support in state departments of education, has meant that it would be extremely difficult to teach about politics and government even if a curriculum was approved. Currently an appropriate curriculum would be difficult to locate, a problem implied in the terms of reference for the Prime Minister's Civics Education Group (Keating, 1994).

A lack of a substantive knowledge base to teach about politics and government has seriously hampered any consideration by teachers of adopting a proactive stance towards citizenship education. If teachers are somewhat typical of the population at large, their levels of knowledge and understanding of political processes are meagre at

best. Yet few teacher education programs offer curriculum courses to rectify that situation, arguing that as long as politics are not a significant component of the school curriculum then their incorporation within an overcrowded teacher education program is problematic. As a consequence teachers feel even less inclined to initiate and participate in teaching about politics and government.

Student Participation

An effective student participation strategy is a key feature of a civics education program that makes a difference in schools. We can formulate essential knowledge for young Australians to be effective citizens, we can devise effective school programs, but if we can't get students to participate in these learning experiences we largely waste our effort. Consequently we need a strategy by which we encourage students to participate.

Whichever suggested participation strategy is adopted it must be set in the context of recent developments within the study of humanities and social sciences in Australian schools (Print, 1994). A most disturbing trend emerging out of the 'eighties is the substantive relative decline in students studying the humanities and social sciences. This is particularly the case with upper secondary students, those for whom acquiring political literacy is most appropriate.

One measure of student participation is the number of Year 12 students enrolled to study subjects through which they could acquire information on political and parliamentary processes. It has already been demonstrated that the opportunity to study civics education in Australia is substantially inadequate. This problem is exacerbated by the relatively declining number of students wishing to study social studies subjects.

According to the *National Report on Schooling in Australia*, in 1986 some 21% of Year 12 students were enrolled in tertiary-accredited humanities and social sciences subjects relative to enrolments in other subjects. It is only in these subjects that students would be able to participate in learning about citizenship education. By 1990 this participation had fallen to nearly 19% and by 1992 to a staggering 14%.

The problem is not that numbers in these subjects are not increasing or holding steady in absolute terms, but that as more students stay on they are not taking subjects in which some civics OTL exists. With rapidly increasing retention rates in the post-compulsory years, it might be expected that substantially greater numbers of students would study humanities and social science subjects. Rather they are opting for a greater diversity of school subjects the result of which is a relative decline in student participation.

National Curriculum

The attempt to create a national curriculum in Australia, known as the national curriculum collaboration, is represented through the national statements and curriculum profiles. In documents such as the Studies of Society and Environment (SSE) profiles, the Australian states have an opportunity to devise appropriate ways of educating young people in citizenship education. For example, the SSE profiles include a component called natural and social systems through which citizenship education could be purposively addressed.

Within the lower secondary school curriculum and the Studies of Society and Environment profile in particular, Strand 6 addresses natural and social systems. Band C within that strand covers Years 7-10 and specifically considers the possibility of studying citizenship education.

More specifically the curriculum profiles at Levels 7 and 8 offer an opportunity to address student needs. Natural and social systems at Level 7, based on assumed fundamental political learning in Level 6, suggests students should analyse ways reform has or could be achieved through political systems. At Level 8 students would evaluate the consequences of these attempts. However this option would have less favourable impact upon learners than the provision of learning's at upper secondary level.

A compulsory course in Year 11 could exist within Strand 6, Band D of the Studies of Society and Environment Profiles. Research findings (Print, 1994) provide a suggested direction for such a course combined with the significant points in the section on student information needs above and the suggestions from the national collaboration in curriculum.

Currently however, the federal government has lost the initiative with the national curriculum collaboration as the states have effectively placed this initiative 'on hold'. In the short term, with the state governments politicallly opposed to the federal government, it is unlikely for this deadlock to be resolved.

Curriculum Options

The needs of students for a set of appropriate learnings in citizenship education have been well documented in the literature (Patrick & Hoge, 1991; Ferguson, 1991; Carter, 1993; Kennedy, 1993; Macintyre, 1994; Print, 1994). The national curriculum goals have set a direction for student need and many other sources have detailed more specific suggestions including the soon to be released report from the Civics education Group (Keating, 1994). In essence they

recognize three main sets of student needs along with implied curriculum options :

1. To educate young people about the processes and issues related to government, the constitution, citizenship and civics in Australia.

2. To promote effective citizenship and active participation of young Australians through an understanding of their rights and responsibilities in a successful democracy.

3. To enhance their capacity and desire to participate effectively and comprehensively in the range of decision-making processes affecting these issues and our democratic structure in general.

Several curriculum options exist for the communication of citizenship education to school students . They are presented in order of probable success at significantly affecting student citizenship understanding. However the solution is not to be found in a specially prepared package of curriculum materials for schools as implied in the Prime Minister's statement (Keating, 1994). The history of Australian curriculum is replete with examples of curriculum packages that have failed to make even minimal impact let alone be implemented to an institutionalized position. Indeed the easy option for the Australian Government would be to devise a curriculum package and then distribute it to Australia's 10,000 schools. But would not only work it would produce counteractive and negative teacher attitudes. And it would not produce politically literate young Australians. Meanwhile five curriculum options can be offered beginning with the least intrusive :

1. *Extend experiential learning opportunities.*

Within school structures these opportunities would consist largely of participation in school voting activities, such as student council elections, and occasional visits to State and Federal Parliaments.

2. *Restructure existing school subjects in the upper secondary curriculum .*

Subjects such as history and economics could be restructured to enhance the component of civics education within them. This option requires extensive change across many subjects, would be state based and problematic , particularly because of vested interests in maintaining the status quo.

3. *Construct specific learning activities in lower secondary school.*

This option could be located within the existing Year 9 / 10 school curriculum which would have appeal as it would not require changes to the upper secondary curriculum. However, this option lacks the recent and potency arguments and would be perceived by students as largely irrelevant to their needs at that time (Print, 1994). Option 3 could also take the form of compulsory lower secondary studies in citizenship education at the Year 9 or Year 10 level. This might consist of compulsory component in an integrated program for all students which would address their OTL.

4. *Develop specially prepared competitive Year 11 and 12 subjects.*

Civics education subjects that would compete with existing subjects in the upper school curriculum could be devised. Experience suggests that these subjects, when placed in open competition with other university-scoring subjects, would probably gain little student support. Despite considerable possible opposition and needs for teacher development, this option has the greatest chance of preparing politically literate young people who can play a knowledgeable, active participatory role in our democracy. One variation of this option would be a compulsory citizenship education subject as is found in most American states.

5. *Eclectic option.*

Various combinations of the above options could also be considered.

Conclusions.

The task ahead for the development of citizenship education in Australia is a significant one. It involves not only a reconceptualisation of citizenship education to meet the demands of a new age, but also a rethinking of how citizenship education might best become a major component of the school curriculum. There will clearly be a special role for social studies education but this will require considerable 'gearing up' if new demands are to be met. It is not a task that can be neglected for the stakes are high as outlined in a recent discussion paper on the topic :

> Not for the first time in its history Australia is in the process of being reinvented. Amongst the country's young people there is a yearning for new symbols

> appropriate to a reinvented world. If young people are not to pluck symbols from the air, or find them in anti-democratic and destructive movements, they must be given knowledge and the tools to help them create new symbols. They need to know where their country has come from, how it works, how it can be judged, how it can be preserved and how it can change. They need to know that behind all these processes is an individual called a citizen, and the groups of citizens that make up a civil society.

It is this process of reinvention that is taking us into a new age. It is now up to educators to deliver a citizenship education for young people that will meet new demands and new priorities. It is an exciting challenge that confronts us all and hopefully, working together, we can design a future that will assist all young people.

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